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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the effectiveness and practicality of various educational approaches for increasing racial tolerance and calls for developing strategies that have been formally evaluated to avoid the waste of time and limited resources. The first section discusses the racial inadequacies of most programs which purport to affect racial tolerance. Most programs are short-term, isolated interventions that do not address changes in general value orientations and social responsibility. Next, short-term intervention strategies and their effects are presented: inter-racial contact; direct, "neutral" teaching about race; reverse role-playing and other dramatic techniques; direct modification of behavior; and behavior modification and classical conditioning. The final section covers efforts to change the overall school milieu, including making concentrated efforts to develop non-racist teaching materials, pressing for greater discussion of human variation, and developing absolute codes for race relations behavior. In the long term, rigorous training of teachers and counselors and development of curriculum materials that portray a multiracial and multicultural Canada are needed. More minority individuals should also be encouraged to become teachers. Four pages of references conclude the paper. (CG)

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EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES TO INCREASE RACIAL TOLERANCE

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In coming years, educators increasingly will be called upon to address race relations issues.[1] The proportion of visible minority students in many school systems is already over 20% and continues to grow, with the consequence that race relations are an ongoing and increasingly significant fact of school life. Moreover, as various interest groups (both minority and otherwise) become more sensitive to racial problems or more vocal about their rectification they will automatically look to the schools for means through which prejudice and discrimination can be attacked; this springs almost mechanically from the general, if inaccurate perception that fighting discrimination is most effectively done through changing prejudicial attitudes. Visible minority groups all across Canada already consistently feel that the best route to foster racial tolerance is through educational programs and their demands on educators are on the rise.[2]

How should teachers and administrators respond to this challenge? Educational resources are finite. Moreover, the commitment of such resources to multicultural education, and within this to the process of increasing tolerance has been severely limited. In such a political climate, the dominant criterion for the adoption of a particular strategy to increase tolerance must be its effectiveness; in short, how well does it work and at what cost in scarce teaching, economic and political resources? Another basic criterion for selection refers to the practicality of a given strategy: can such a program actually be implemented, given other claims on the educational system and in the light of its existing structure?

Despite the importance of these constraints, it is a sad fact that most ongoing programs we find today in the schools aimed at broadening racial tolerance have been put together based on considerations far from these. Typically created in response to a felt need by local visible minority community spokespersons or by concerned teachers or administrators, the shape and expected results of such programs have been primarily determined through reference to 'common sense' and basic social psychology. Rarely are these attempts at increasing tolerance evaluated for their effectiveness, nor are they often based on firm evidence of what does and does not work.[3] The consequence is an unnecessary waste of scarce resources.

What can be said with certainty about what does and does not foster racial tolerance? I would like to take this opportunity to review the range of approaches which have been tried internationally, concentrating particularly on those which have been formally evaluated. I will begin with a few basic axioms -- general truths to be considered when implementing such programs. I will then address the question of who to focus upon in such programs. I

subsequently analyze a range of short-term intervention strategies and their effects. This is followed by a discussion of strategies aimed at the long term modification of student and school worldviews towards the end of racial tolerance.

I. BASIC AXIOMS

First, most of the types of programs which purport to affect tolerance attempt to do so through modifying values. To this, many educators object that in comparison with teaching facts, value education ~~is~~ difficult, impermanent and less certain of success. Were this argument true, education would not therefore be a very effective means to change racial attitudes. In fact, there is actually no empirical support for this point of view. Value education seems just as permanent and effective as teaching facts and this objection to race relations programs is therefore irrelevant. Of course, newly acquired values (like new facts) must be integrated into a supportive personal system of values and beliefs if they are to be retained permanently[4]; as a corollary, if fundamental inconsistencies exist between newly acquired values and what one holds to be true in related domains, it is the former which is usually the victim when people try to eliminate the inconsistency.

This brings up a second point. Most programs used so far are short-term, isolated interventions into a curriculum and a social environment in the schools which have not been significantly modified to reflect values of racial and multicultural tolerance. No such project can have much effect in a milieu which contradicts its spirit, and the general educational context therefore deserves very close attention. [5] Indeed, one can go further and

say that the ideal (but admittedly long term) route to racial tolerance is through changing very general value orientations towards humanity and social responsibility (as discussed in Section IV.), rather than through a single-pronged, highly interventionist, explicit attack on racial values alone. In fact, I believe that it is unarguable that such large scale value change, as brought on through evolving curriculum materials, better classroom inter-group social relations, changed philosophies of education and by increasingly less ethnocentric and more universalistic Canadian views of human similarity and difference has had a profound and positive effect on students' ethnic and racial attitudes over the past ten years.

Third, while it is a common perception among educators that racial prejudices among children are a simple reflection of their parent's racial attitudes, this is not so; childhood prejudices are not just a case of straightforward cross-generational learning. In particular, it has been shown that, everything else being equal, there are sharp differences in prejudice between children, and that a high degree of racial prejudice is a strong function personal anxiety, poor self-esteem and neurosis.[6] An obvious conclusion is that because many prejudiced children evidently use such prejudices to shore up their own self esteem, in such children prejudicial attitudes are likely to be quite resistant to change. Even the most potent programming to increase tolerance will not therefore affect everyone; those for whom prejudice fulfills a deep psychological need are best dealt with through the alternative means of counselling and discipline.

Fourth, one should be careful that strategies aimed at the elimination of intolerance in majority group children do not negatively affect the self-concept of visible minority children themselves; classroom activities or

material which unintentionally appears to be stereotypic, threatening or humiliating from the point of view of visible minority children should be avoided, regardless of its positive effects on the attitudes of other children. Clearly also, teachers are not competent to make this decision by themselves, and should enlist the aid of adult members of the communities in question or of professionals in this area of attitude change.

Finally, it should be noted that students are the least prejudiced segment of the population. Canadians are generally quite tolerant (at least on a world scale) and children are more so. Moreover, they are on the leading edge of racial value change. As a consequence of this and the fact that they are 'captives' of a formal learning context in which they are required to participate, students are without doubt the easiest group in the population to approach. In addition, inasmuch as their attitudes have not typically become as structured and circularly defined as those of adults, they are also the easiest segment of the population to significantly influence. The potential impact of educational programs aimed at increasing tolerance is consequently great.

II. FOCUS

Resources available to fight racism are in short supply, due chiefly to a lack of will on the part of educational administrators, this being brought on through the ineffectiveness of visible minority group pressure as compared with that of other interest groups.[7] A rational strategy must therefore focus on those people where such efforts will yield the best and most significant effect. The first option to consider is obvious. Should one concentrate primarily on students or teachers?

There seems to be a gathering consensus that, everything else being equal, one should concentrate on teachers.[8] If teachers are racially tolerant, well informed, sensitive to racial issues, and aware of the need to foster tolerance, they will automatically contribute to a milieu which will help students acquire a similar outlook. Unfortunately, everything else is not equal. Teachers generally have little training, knowledge or interest in race relations and some are actively prejudiced. Almost none of Canada's teachers has had any formal training in issues of ethnocultural or racial tolerance before entering the profession--a situation which is perpetuating itself in today's generation of new teachers. They are also an overworked interest group, who have generally argued that racism is a problem for students, not for them. Moreover, inservice training and other means which might likely rectify teachers' deficiencies in this area are typically ineffective: so far, they have been too short term, too superficial and too much a function of voluntary teacher participation and of teacher interest. In most contexts, I believe that it is unlikely that we should expect much short-term movement on this front, but it must remain an important long-range goal.

This leaves one with the difficult objective of addressing students through teachers who are generally ill-equipped to do so. Given this constraint, which students should be addressed? Generally, prejudice is a strong function of a child's age and grade. They start out unprejudiced (by definition), yet by the time they are adolescents their attitudes towards race have largely stabilized.[9] This presents educators with a paradox. In terms of racial incidents, adolescents are generally seen to be "the problem", and this attracts remedial attention to them. At the same time,

the most effective value and behavioral modification can be done on pre-school children and those in elementary school.[10]

In overview, the argument to concentrate on the young is powerful. Moreover, testing has shown that short-term projects generally have no effect whatsoever on strongly prejudiced adolescents.[11] Rather, greater change is effected among those who are less prejudiced to begin with. For the archetypical highly prejudiced adolescent (who is male, authoritarian, relatively deprived, conservative and alienated from school), perhaps the best that can be done is abandon attempts to change their prejudices and instead force them to not discriminate.[12]

III. SHORT-TERM TECHNIQUES OF INTERVENTION

A. Inter-racial Contact

A naive but common assumption is that tolerance is a straightforward, positive function of closer contact between racial groups.[13] It is not.[14] Contact in contexts of high racial polarization or structured inequality usually reinforces intolerance; this is well illustrated by attempts to increase tolerance in the southern United States soon after the schools had been forcibly desegregated.[15] Even benign but non-collective contact like inter-racial school outings or exposure to the culture and history of others may be totally ineffective.[16]

Even so, one of the most consistently effective strategy of all to decrease racism involves selective contact. It is one that harks back to the pioneering studies of Sherif et al.[17] This is to organize multi-racial cooperative groups operating towards a common, mutually beneficial,

superordinate goal in situations of interdependence and equal status.[18] Such groups have long been known to foster better inter-group relations in industry and are now being successfully applied to race relations in the schools.[19] A typical educational example would be to purposely have students of different racial backgrounds work together on a creative or discovery project, organized in such a way as each child's individual success is unavoidably based on real cooperation with all others in the group.[20] The great attraction of this method is that it requires few new curriculum resources, little input from outside experts, nor much in the way of teacher sophistication or sensitivity. It apparently does not even matter what the topics or tasks are, given that they do not allow the group to divide along the lines of race or to become totally individualized. As an example, I might mention one test which involved Baltimore children in such groups over a period of ten weeks.[21] The work groups involved 7th and 8th graders in grammar and punctuation tasks. Subsequent testing showed a significant increase in inter-racial friendships which were a function of neither sex nor ability. So effective and 'cost efficient' is this technique that it should be strongly encouraged.

B. Direct, 'Neutral' Teaching About Race

Perhaps the most common approach to racial intolerance and its reduction has been to introduce factual material on racial minority groups into the curriculum, such material being presented in such a fashion as to highlight historical or present day inequities and the difficulties faced by visible minority groups. Specific topics range from presentation of historical analyses of racial groups to modern race relations, to descriptions of the cross-cultural problems faced by such groups. Despite its popularity, this

approach is fraught with difficulties and the evidence suggests that it does not usually work very well.[22] Occasionally, these programs even increase prejudice.[23]

Why does direct teaching typically produce such a poor effect? Several reasons have been put forward, all of which seem plausible. Because this approach stresses facts and a 'neutral' analysis of race relations it does not directly challenge students' values: value change can accordingly only occur via internalization of the factual inequities faced by these groups so deeply that students feel required to shift their values; this apparently rarely happens. Also, such techniques do not personally involve students and cannot easily get around the growing tendency for students to consider all forms of sociological analysis as arbitrary opinion--as just one possible point of view. In addition, teachers are manifestly unprepared to use this approach to maximal advantage. They know little about the groups concerned, their heritage or their present situations. Moreover, these strategies subtly and inappropriately shift the focus of 'the problem' from the majority to the minority[24]; racism is a problem for visible minorities, sure enough, but the majority group is the source of that problem, not them.

C. Direct, 'Value Laden' Teaching About Race

In contrast, more provocative teaching techniques which explicitly articulate relevant values generally do work.[25] This kind of value articulation can be achieved through several strategies. First, teachers should use an individualized, highly psychological perspective to present race relations material rather than a depersonalized and abstract sociological, historical or economic one. While this distorts reality and panders to the growing

tendency to 'psychologize' social phenomena, it can nevertheless personalize race and make it meaningful to students.[26] How would you feel under such circumstances? Why did they do that? Questions like these bring an important affective components into teaching race, as long as it is done in such as way was to avoid sending a message to prejudiced children that they are fundamentally immoral or inadequate because of the beliefs they hold or because of the things which they have done in the past.[27] This affective strategy has been shown to modify significantly the attitudes of low to moderately ego defensive individuals.[28]

Teachers should also take an overtly strong moral stand against racism. Remember, if the object is value change, it is best to address values directly. Prejudice and discrimination should be portrayed as issues of right and wrong, not just of inequality; ideally, past and present discriminators should be portrayed as human beings (rather than as caricatures), who because of ignorance or a limited view of the situation are acting immorally and producing bad effects, even if they are not aware of doing so.

D. Reverse Role-Playing and Other Dramatic Techniques

Over the past decade reverse role-playing has become a popular technique in a variety of workshops and other groups aimed at sensitizing adults to what the world looks like from the 'other side' of social situations. Should such techniques be extended to children and to issues of race? Probably not. It should be noted that even for adults the effects of reverse role-playing are quite variable.[29] Studies have shown that this technique can be effective with young children, but (as in the adult case) this is dependent on a high

level of teacher competence; in contrast, a recent large scale test of the effect of dramatic techniques in Britain showed no appreciable positive effects.[30] Reverse role-playing is perhaps best reserved for instances of well trained professionals sensitizing teachers.

E. Direct Modification of Behavior

Perhaps the most fundamental programming question that one could ask is whether one should devote one's energy primarily to changing racial attitudes in order to change behavior or vice-versa. The individualized, psychologistic mentality of the schools leads one to the inevitable conclusion that one should try to change prejudices (beliefs and values) in order (by doing so) to eliminate discrimination (behavior). Most projects are oriented this way, with the notable exception of those employing cooperative work groups. Is such a strong concentration on attitudinal change supported by research? The answer is 'No'. It remains an open question, and there is considerable support for using the opposite approach.[31] If people are required to act equally many will eventually come to think equally, if for no other reason than to remove the contradictions between what they think and what they do. This appears to be what happens in cooperative work groups.

There is great untapped potential in behaviorally oriented approaches to racial tolerance. One obvious conclusion (that one would expect in any case) is that school boards everywhere should implement absolute, invariant, explicit policies on racial discrimination in the schools which treat discrimination seriously, stress the punishment of discriminators (rather than rehabilitation) and allow little mitigating consideration of the individual circumstances of a given discriminatory act. It must be made

clear to students parents, teachers and administrators that discrimination is morally objectionable and will be dealt with so severely that it is not in the individual's self-interest to discriminate. Such policies have been developed by several major school boards, as for example in Toronto, North York and Vancouver.[32] However, most major school boards like Calgary's or Edmonton's have no explicit racial policy at all.

F. Behavior Modification, Classical Conditioning and Other Uncommon Approaches

There are a variety of other, more rarely used strategies, which have been developed primarily to deal with adult inter-group prejudices rather than those of children.[33] Many of these, say for example the highlighting of belief inconsistency or of inter-group belief similarity, or for that matter, classical conditioning (Kehoe 1978) appear to have rather limited potential applicability to the educational context. This is either (like the former) because the technique cannot be easily applied or (like the latter) because of ethical problems in its administration.

IV. APPROACHES TO RACIAL TOLERANCE THROUGH MODIFYING CONTEXT AND WORLDVIEW

Single projects aimed at racial tolerance are useful, but not without significant contextual support and reinforcement. In short, tolerance cannot be fully achieved without a multi-pronged effort that results in changing the overall school milieu such that it affirms equality and tolerance throughout. Given the political and economic realities of the school context, the development of such an overall approach must inevitably be a difficult task. How can it best be approached?

At the onset, it should be appreciated that education is a mass phenomenon, both at the level of teachers, administrators and students. Contextual change can therefore be achieved only through mass techniques--techniques which if they are to be successful must be quite routinized and non-voluntaristic. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Make more concentrated efforts to develop non-racist teaching materials which present an all-inclusive version of Canadians and of humanity.[34] This is a topic which many provincial Departments and Boards of Education are presently pursuing, and one which is high on the priority of the federal Multiculturalism Directorate. However, it remains one where the primary efforts so far have been oriented towards the elimination of overtly objectionable material, and there continues to be no real consistency about what constitutes effective tolerance-confirming materials beyond that generated by common sense. The editorial processes through which curriculum material pass remain so profound, so coloured by outdated educational ideologies, so out of touch with the facts of race relations and so conservative that most material aimed at the active creation of tolerance which survives the process does so only in a tame and gutted fashion. In short, this is an area where a major shake-up is required.

2. Press for greater and more frank discussion of human variation, but without the use of the inappropriate (and false) concepts of biological races still in use in the schools. There are no authentic, scientifically useful biological races; what people conceive of as

biological racial categories are in fact socially-defined criteria of group inclusion and exclusion, and students should be aware of it.

3. Develop absolute race relations codes of behavior for students, teachers and administrators. Beyond their function to help maintain the rights and self concepts of minority students, such codes are learning devices for non-minority children--ones which teach that discrimination is illegal and will be punished. They are also effective in legitimating racial tolerance among teachers and administrators.

4. Encourage cooperative work groups, especially in the early grades. Use a range of intra- and inter-classroom techniques to ensure that majority group children cannot socially isolate themselves from their minority group peers and to ensure that minority group children are not similarly isolated.

5. Develop means to quickly incorporate new visible minority students into meaningful inter-racial peer groups.

6. Create a school board level mechanism for attitude testing in order to have a basis for selective short term intervention to increase racial tolerance and evaluate ongoing changes.[35] Use the techniques of participant observation to identify key discrimination problems and to contribute to an evaluation of the effect of conscious programming aimed at its elimination.

7. In the implementation of any short-term program, consult the growing literature on this issue rather than suffer the consequences of

ignoring that literature.

8. Make use of outside resource people in designing programs; be sure that these people actually have a grasp on the literature and have not just learned their trade through 'practical experience.'

9. Don't forget that one significant resource base is available everywhere: the visible minority communities themselves—especially in order to draw out people such as elders, spokespersons, religious leaders, artistis, etc.[36] Use them to make students more conscious of the rich variety of Canadian cultural ways and of the ultimate point that cultural ways aside, people are pretty much the same everywhere.

In the longer term:

1. Support rigorous in-service training of teachers and counselors by professionals. Make such training mandatory in key situations, and make certain that the effectiveness of this training can be evaluated.

2. Provide more race relations pre-service training. It is unrealistic to think that teachers can easily develop this skill and knowledge base after they are full-time teachers.

3. Press for curriculum materials in every topical area which better portray Canada as a multicultural and multiracial country, and Canadians as being multicultural and multi-racial.

4. Encourage more visible minority individuals to enter the teaching profession; regardless of the teaching contexts they enter, they will

provide role models for children from their respective groups and their very presence will require majority children to broaden their role models to better include cultural and racial diversity.

CONCLUSIONS

Enough is known to make intelligent choices of strategies that will work to change racial attitudes and behavior in school populations. There is now no reason to sally forth with untried strategies unless the objective is experimental rather than practical. Secondly, it is clear that this kind of programming fills a need which common sense and commitment to social equality demand be addressed. Today's children are tomorrow's adults; we have the opportunity to help them be more at ease with physical difference than our generation--much to their benefit and the enrichment of their lives. Whether or not we address this question is dependent on our commitment and upon political pressure from concerned interest groups; whether these are to be sufficient to the task is a question not for the future, but for now.

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NOTES

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1. This paper was based on an earlier one presented in 1982 at the conference Perspectives on Race, Education and Social Development put on by the Race Relations Institute of the University of British Columbia (see D'Oyley 1982).

2. For example, when I asked leaders and spokespersons drawn from a broad range of Calgary's visible minority communities about which methods were most effective in the elimination of discrimination, educational means were by far the most preferred (Buchignani 1982).

3. Indeed, in many school districts one could not even get permission to test one of these programs.

4. Brislin and Pedersen (1976).

5. Bagley and Verma (1981); Jeffcoate (1979).

6. Verma et al (1983).

7. E.g.: a widely-publicized report on discrimination in Calgary (Buchignani 1982) noted many visible minority grievances about education,to not effect; in contrast, a single rural teacher's (Jim Keegstra) prejudices against a more powerful ethnocultural group led to significant government action.

8. Jeffcoate (1979); Williams and Edwards (1969).

9. Pushkin and Veness (1973).

10. Trobovitz (1969); Williams and Edwards (1969).

11. Leach (1967).

12. Bagley and Verma (1981).

13. Allport (1954);Domnitz (1964).

14. Amir (1969).

15. Valien (1954); Campbell (1958); Webster (1961).

16. Trobovitz (1969).

17. Sherif et al (1961).

18. Sharan (1980); Slavin (1979); Cook (1969).

19. Blake and Mouton (1964).

20. Cooperative games also appear to have this potential. See Rogers et al

(1981).

21. Hansell and Slavin (1981).

22. Stenhouse (1975); Verma and MacDonald (1971); Parkinson and MacDonald (1972); Bagley and Verma (1972).

23. Miller (1969).

24. Ijaz (1984: 133)

25. Verma and Bagley (1981).

26. See Kehoe (1984) for an elaboration of this argument.

27. Epstein (1968; 1972); Thomas (1978).

28. Sarnoff and Katz (1956); Rubin (1967).

29. See Culbertson (1957) and Kehoe and Rogers (1978) for positive cases.

30. Bagley and Verma (1981).

31. Bem (1970); Bagley and Verma (1975:256); Worchel and Cooper (1976).

32. North York has complimented this with an informative resource kit on racial incidents (North York n.d.).

33. For a brief review of many of them, see Hayles (1978).

34. See Buchignani (1980) for a more extensive discussion of this point; Wood (1981) addresses the social science curriculum specifically.

35. See Jenkins et al (1979) on the use of testing.

36. See Ijaz (1984:133-135) for a successful program of this type.